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CP GUATEMALA'S CHART OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE
AND "COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP"

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A. Background of the Chart

Charts of CP organizational structure--prepared by non-Communist sources--are not uncommon; but such charts--prepared by a CP--are rarely obtained.

The chart which follows is an English-language version of an original (hctographic) document obtained from the files of CP, Guatemala (Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo--PGT) in July 1954. The original is completely "clean" as to identification of either source (cartographer) or Subject-Party (i.e., the particular CP depicted in the chart). The facts proper to the acquisition of the chart indicate strongly that CP Guatemala is the subject. Furthermore, the charted organizational structure parallels (both as to substance and specific terminology) that which is set forth in Chapter III of CP Guatemala (PGT) Statutes, approved at that Party's II Congress (December 1952), and in force as of the overthrow of the Arbenz regime, 27 June 1954.

B. Emphasis on "Centralism"--Function of the Secretariat of the Central Committee

The concentric-circle pattern emphasizes the Party's "centralism" ("centralized leadership," in the language of the Statutes)--the primary, all-decisive deposit of power at "the Center." Actually, however, it should be noted that the innermost circle is reserved for a collective body (the Secretariat) which is executive in nature. For example, the function of the Secretariat of the Central Committee is to perform the daily ("current") work of the Party's leadership, i.e., to act in behalf of the Political Commission, which, in turn, is responsible to the Central Committee.

The Political Commission is the supreme authoritative body between sessions of the Central Committee (CC). It too, however, is only an executive arm of the CC.

It is interesting to note how closely, mutatis mutandis, CP Guatemala followed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in preparing for its own (II National) Congress. Especially notable (in addition to the comparison between the Political Commission and the Presidium) is the creation of the Secretariat of the Central Committee.

The CP Guatemala studied both Khrushchev's theses on changes in the Statutes of the CPSU, and the draft of the revised CPSU Statutes. In

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both the draft and the final version of the CPSU Statutes (approved at the XIX Congress, October 1952), Art. 34 reads:

"34. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union organizes a Presidium to direct the work of the Central Committee between plenary sessions and a Secretariat to direct current work, chiefly as concerns verification of the fulfillment of Party decisions and the selection of cadres." (Underscoring added.)

CP Guatemala's theses on the draft of its revised statutes state:

"Among the national organs a new one has been created: The Secretariat of the C. C. Practice has confirmed the need for a national organ which will perform the work of leadership on a daily basis; which will organize ("verify") the fulfillment of the decisions of the Political Commission of the C. C. and of the C. C.; which will see to the development of the leading cadres, and to their distribution. This new organ is the Secretariat of the C. C., which will be subordinate to the C. C. and the P. C. (Political Commission) of the C. C." (Underscoring added.)

Art. 23 of the Statutes of CP Guatemala (PGT), approved at the II National Congress, December 1952, states that the Secretariat of the CC is composed of the Secretary General and the Secretaries decided upon by the CC. It repeats the duties and functions cited above, and adds that the Secretariat must render a report on its activities to the Political Commission of the CC.

C. Emphasis on "Collective Leadership"

It is noteworthy that the chart reflects no mention of the Secretary General. It presents only collective bodies throughout the leadership ("command") echelons. For years, the Secretary General of many a CP was (and in many cases still is), in practice, a small-scale, "national" version of Stalin; he has exercised, in effect, considerable "one-man rule" during the era of the "cult of the individual," and has been cartographically depicted at the commanding peak of the Party structure.

After Stalin's death (5 March 1953), a strong move toward the establishment of "collective leadership" was made in certain Communist Parties, particularly those in the Soviet orbit. The following data may give some indication of CP Guatemala's development--or, at least, of its pretensions as to its own development:

1. CP Guatemala took steps to strengthen collective leadership in October 1952, over four months before Stalin's death. In

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preparation for its own (II) National Congress (December 1952), CP Guatemala issued discussion materials which paralleled significantly (and were in part identical with) the discussion materials issued by CPSU prior to its XIX Congress (October, 1952). CP Guatemala members were urged to study the CPSU materials. (Additional recommended materials were: Statutes of CP China, and the Draft Program of CP India.)

2. Specifically, the theses on the draft of proposed new CP Guatemala Statutes cited the drive toward collective leadership: the power base of the Secretary General was to be changed; he was to be made fully conscious that he was an instrument of the Central Committee, rather than "Secretary General of the Party" as a whole. The directive ("command") supremacy of the CC (between Congresses) and of the Political Commission (between Plenary Sessions of the CC) was strongly reaffirmed.

- (a) According to the "old" Statutes, (Art. 12), the Secretary General was elected directly by the National Congress. The members of the CC were elected in the same way. Hence, the Secretary General owed his position to a body superior in power to the CC, i.e., to the National Congress--the highest body of all. The net result was that he was known as the Secretary General of the Party.

- (b) The theses on the draft of the new CP Guatemala Statutes read:

"In the old Statutes, among the rights of the Congress was that of electing the Secretary General of the Party. The draft of the new Statutes accords to the Central Committee the right to elect its Secretary General. This fact constitutes an important factor for the centralized leadership and the collective work of the Party. It leaves the Central Committee as the sole top-level organ of the Party between Congresses. In short, and this is a reason in favor of the draft, in our Party there is no Secretary General of the Party; but rather, there is a Secretary General of the Central Committee, elected by the latter." (Underscoring supplied.)

- (c) The Statutes of the CP Guatemala (approved by the II Congress, December 1952) stress (in Arts. 19-23) the supremacy of the (collective) CC between Congresses,

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and of the (collective) Political Commission of the C.C. between Plenary Sessions of the latter. The Central Committee is clearly cited as the power base of the Political Commission, the Secretariat of the C. C., and the Secretary General of the C. C.

It should be noted however that while supreme authority resides in a collective body, the leadership (guidance) function of the Secretary General of the C. C. is declared (in Art. 21 of the Statutes) in the following limited terms: "The Secretary General of the C. C. directs the Political Commission and the Secretariat of the C. C." -- both creatures of the C. C.--but he is not cited as directing the C. C., or the Congress, or the Party.

The CP Guatemala again returned to the question of "collective leadership" at the Plenum of the C. C. held 16-18 October 1953. At that Plenum, Bernardo ALVARADO Monzon, "Secretary of the Central Committee," (National Secretary of Organization) cited the steps being taken to establish collective leadership in the Communist Parties throughout the world. He declared that the CP Guatemala already "embodies, in its statutes and in its daily work, the principle of collective leadership as a fundamental working rule. Thanks to it we have achieved important results in our struggle." ALVARADO went on to state that the II National Congress of the CP Guatemala had been "a great victory in our work as regards collective leadership." He stressed the fact that materials proper to that Congress were widely distributed throughout the Party far enough in advance to permit full discussion. He then declared:

"To this fact, and, among others, to the fact that we held the II Congress of the Party a few weeks after the XIX Congress of the CPSU, the materials of which were most valuable to us in our work, we owe the correctness and transcendental conclusions of our Congress, not only for our Party, but also for the revolutionary struggle of our country."

ALVARADO stressed the point that "collective leadership" means collective work by collective organs:

"Our statutes establish the Central Committee as the supreme organ between Congresses; the Central Committee is a collective organ which centralizes the national leadership of the Party, and which elects, from among its own members, the Political Commission of the Central Committee, the Secretariat of the Central Committee, the Commissions of the Central Committee and their respective officers-in-charge (Responsibles)--all collective bodies of leadership and work.

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"One of the most effective factors in guaranteeing the collective solution of many problems has been the creation of the Secretariat of the Central Committee as (the organ) responsible for the daily work of the leadership of the Party, and for organizing the fulfillment of decisions.

"Thanks to the creation of the Secretariat of the C.C. we can give assurances that, in general, all the problems of the daily work of leadership have been solved in a collective manner; and that in the central leadership of our Party, "one-man" tendencies (tendencias unipersonales) have not thrived, nor have problems been solved in an individualistic, one-sided manner." (Underscoring supplied.)

ALVARADO also discussed Party weaknesses with respect to collective leadership. These dealt, in the main, not with structure, i.e., not with the formal deposit of power in collective bodies, but with functional failures of those bodies; e.g., they failed to ensure the full participation of all members of those bodies in the work, to make the work collective in nature, as regards both its preparation (planning, discussion) and its execution. He found that minorities were "running the show" in certain collective bodies--even in the Central Committee--on a simple default basis, i.e., because other members just did not enter into the work.¹

There are indications that Jose Manuel FORTUNY may have been suspended as Secretary General on 26 May 1954, for violation of the principle of "collective leadership" and for other leadership failures in the "counterrevolutionary" crisis of the Arbenz regime in that period.

The organ of the CP Guatemala (PGT), Tribuna Popular, 27 May 1954, reports on a Plenum of the CC held the preceding day. The current "aggressive and interventionist steps" of "imperialism" were discussed, and Party tasks and measures were agreed upon.

Bernardo ALVARADO Monzon, the outstanding advocate of "collective leadership," reported, in the name of the Political Commission of the CC, on Fortuny's "health" and on "measures adopted by the Political Commission to organize his rest and achieve his speedy recovery." Alfredo GUERRA Borges, "Secretary of the Central Committee," participated in the discussion of Fortuny's health. He referred to the need for "raising the combativeness of the masses and the Party," for "correcting weaknesses in (Party) work," and for "strengthening collective leadership at all

¹ As this is a commentary on the previously cited chart, and not a study of "collective leadership," additional points made by ALVARADO will not be set forth here.

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levels of the Party in the spirit of the Central Committee resolutions of October, 1953." (An apparent reference to the above-cited CC Plenum of 16-18 October 1953, at which ALVARADO delivered his report on collective leadership.) At the 26 May 1954 Plenum, the CC chose ALVARADO as acting Secretary General of the CC for the period of Fortuny's recuperation, and took steps to strengthen the collective Secretariat of the CC by new and additional personnel assignments.

The emphasis put by the CP Guatemala on collective leadership--reflected in the following chart--is particularly noteworthy because it was linked with the 19th Congress of the CPSU, prior to Stalin's death. It has been generally thought that the trend toward collective leadership started after Stalin's death.² However, the organizational thinking of the CP Guatemala should give rise to a more thorough study of the evolution of the current trend in collective leadership. In particular, the genesis of the collective leadership principle should be ascertained for each Communist Party in order to establish or deny parallels with CP Guatemala.

² It is known that, in the summer of 1951, in a severe crisis of Party leadership caused by vigorous prosecution, the CPUSA stressed the need for "collective leadership," and established a de facto top-level secretariat of three to handle daily work.

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